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THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND THE WAR

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Nearly all of the articles and books written on the subject of the war have dealt with the western front. The Balkan situation and the relation of the Ottoman Empire to the conditions that precipitated this world conflict have been little discussed. On the other hand, there has apparently been a distinct endeavor upon the part of the Central Powers, and especially of Germany, to keep attention fixed upon the western front. The tentative peace propositions that have been issued from Berlin from time to time and the addresses in the Reichstag have dealt with Alsace and Lorraine, Belgium and Poland, with almost no reference to Armenia and Turkey. Even the peace suggestions of the Pope, sent out to the world, made the merest allusion to the eastern area of the conflict but spoke with repeated emphasis upon adjustments that might be made on the western European frontier.

The attention of the reading public has been so repeatedly turned to the western area of the war, and held there by newspaper correspondents and magazine articles, that few are aware of the fact that the real object of the conflict, if not its center, is in the East and not in the West. In saying this, no special emphasis is laid upon the Russian Empire, either at the outset of the war or in its present distracted condition. Though the Central Powers were not primarily attempting to gain control of Russia, they did however wish to reduce Russia in her military strength to such an extent that she would cease to be a menace to the carrying

out of the ambitious ideas of the Kaiser. It is also apparent from the history of the outbreak of the war that the strike of Germany against Belgium and France, and incidentally against England, was not primarily to conquer and annex those countries to Germany but was to remove them from the ranks of dangerous antagonists in order that Germany's hand might be free to push her deep-laid plan for securing supremacy in the Balkans and across Asia Minor to the Persian Gulf.

For many years Germany's military and political leaders and writers have dwelt upon the importance of Germany's having a field for expansion. Germany's African colonies have proven a disappointment in that they did not furnish an attractive field for German colonization. Even to the outbreak of the war, the number of Germans in her four African colonies was comparatively negligible, while those who had gone to Africa with a view to colonizing and developing German territory there were free to express their disappointment. There was little prospect that Africa would be inhabited by any considerable number of German emigrants eager to establish new homes and to build up a new business there. That being the case, it was evident that other areas suitable to German colonization and easy of approach should be discovered, since it had been accepted as inevitable that Germany must have a field for expansion in order to provide for her excess population and to afford adequate field for her increasing commerce.

In 1905, Prof. Joseph Ludwig Reimer, in *A Pan-German Germany*, said:

It is precisely our craving for expansion that drives us into the paths of conquest, and in view of which all chatter about peace and humanity can and must remain nothing but chatter.

Prof. Ernst Hasse, in the same year, in *The Colonization of the German Folk Territory*, said: .

All the policy, internal and external, of the empire ought to be subordinated to this governing idea—the Germanization of all the remains of foreign populations within the empire and the procuring for the German people of new territories proportionate to its strength and its needs of expansion.

Baron v. Vietinghoff-Scheel, at a meeting of the Pan-German League in Erfurt, in September, 1912, said:

Our frontiers are too narrow. We must become land hungry, must acquire new regions for settlement; otherwise we will be a sinking people, a stranded race. True love for our people and its children commands us to think of their future, however much they may accuse us of quarrelsomeness and lust of war.

Paul de Lagarde, in 1913, in his German writings, said:

We must create a Central Europe which will guarantee the peace of the entire continent from the moment when it shall have driven the Russians from the Black Sea and the Slavs from the south, and shall have conquered large tracts to the east of our frontiers for German colonization.

Klaus Wagner, in his *War*, in 1906 writes:

Every great people needs new territory. It must expand over foreign soil; it must expel the foreigners by the power of the sword.

In 1906, Ernst Hasse, in his *World Politics, Imperialism, and Colonial Politics*, said:

The territory open to future German expansion must extend from the North Sea and the Baltic to the Persian Gulf, absorbing the Netherlands and Luxembourg, Switzerland, the whole basin of the Danube, the Balkan Peninsula and Asia Minor.

Amicus Patriae, Armenien und Kreta, eine Lebensfrage für Deutschland, 1896:

In this nineteenth century, when Germany has become the first power in the world, are we incapable of doing what our ancestors did? Germany must lay her mighty grasp upon Asia Minor. The Turk has lost his rights, not only from the moral but also from the strictly legal point of view. At the Congress of Berlin in 1878 he gave undertakings, not one of which he has kept. His claims are nullified.

F. List, *Sammtliche Schriften*, 1850:

The right and left banks of the Danube from Presburg to its mouth, the northern provinces of Turkey, and the west coast of the Black Sea—do they not offer large tracts of land, naturally fertile and as yet unexploited, to the German emigrants?

Friedrich Naumann, *Asia*, 1899:

All weakening of German national energy by pacifist associations or analogous activities reinforces the formidably increasing power of those who rule today from Cape to Cairo, from Ceylon to the Polar Sea. No truce with England. Let our policy be a national policy. This must be the mainspring of our action in the Eastern question. This is the fundamental reason which necessitates our political indifference to the suffering of Christians in the Turkish Empire, painful as these must be to our private feelings. The truth here, as elsewhere, is that we must find out which is the greatest and morally the most important task. When the choice has been made there must be no tergiversation. William II has made his choice; he is the friend of the Padisha, because he believes in a greater Germany.

These quotations are sufficient to show the trend of thinking of German political, military and historical writers, as well as writers on economics. The eyes of Germany were turned toward the Balkan Peninsula and Ottoman Empire not only as providing a field into which excess German population could flow but as affording a basis for the increase of political and military power to Germany.

THE RESOURCES OF TURKEY

We of the West have been accustomed to think of Turkey as almost a barren and desolate waste, and so have not realized that within the bounds of Asiatic Turkey there was much to attract the colonizer and the European nation who would conquer for the sake of exploitation. There is no country of its size lying so near the centers of European civilization possessing, as does Turkey, untold, undeveloped resources. These resources have not only not been developed under the 500 years of Mohammedan rule but their very existence has not been discovered and published to the world except in small part. The policy of Turkey was to exclude the entrance of foreign capital for the development of internal resources, while the government that claimed ownership of all mineral products was not capable of developing these resources. The writer has known of silver and copper mines in the interior of Turkey, operated by the Turkish government, that not only produced no returns to the operating government, but were a constant liability, the product of the mines not meeting

the expense of production. One of the outstanding reasons for this, beyond the natural propensity of the Turkish official to graft, was the absence of transportation facilities. When lead and silver and copper must needs be transported hundreds of miles upon the backs of camels over foot-worn paths, through mountains and plains crossed by swollen streams at certain periods of the year, it is not difficult to conceive that the cost of production might easily exceed the value of the product. In the interior of Turkey there are apparently unlimited deposits of valuable minerals. It is widely known that there are mountains of high-grade copper ore which have hardly been drawn upon up to the present time. The writer has heard natives of the country speak of copper mines in the Vilayet of Mamouret-ul-Aziz and Diarbekir where the ore was of such pure quality that it was impossible for the natives with their black powder to break it up for transportation. With the best method of tamping known to them, the drill hole into which their black powder was inserted and tamped, instead of producing a shattering of the ore, fired the charge like a rifle. Copper of this purity the natives were unable to do anything with, but it awaits development under modern methods of mining.

The country is also blessed with many water powers of large value which might be utilized for all kinds of manufacturing purposes as well as for irrigation. Asiatic Turkey is by no means a desert but offers rich returns to the government that will develop the resources that lie upon the surface as well as those that are more concealed.

The climate is varied and suited to a great variety of grain and fruit products. By the introduction of commercial fertilizers and modern methods of agriculture, the agricultural products of the country which have been for generations sufficient to supply the needs of a fairly large population might be quadrupled in quantity and quality. German explorers have crossed the country during the last fifteen years in many directions and have taken careful note of their widely extended observations, and thus the leaders in Germany were aware of the rich resources of that country, which would not only provide for a surplus

population but which might be made to furnish an adequate base for military operations in the future.

What is true of the Ottoman Empire east of the Bosphorus is true in a large measure of the Balkan Peninsula extending from the Adriatic Sea across to the Black Sea. There is large mineral wealth in that country now undeveloped, with water power and other resources available for the uses of any stable, enterprising government that can be established. While the expansion of Germany to the northwest would give her an outlet to the North Sea, which she has so long desired, with the dense population of the Netherlands and of Belgium they would not afford the field for colonization of which Germany so greatly felt the need. But the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire offer every facility for an extensive colonization and are full also of promise of large commercial and industrial expansion and of a great increase in military power.

THE BAGDAD RAILWAY

The railway line connecting Berlin with Constantinople was open to traffic in 1888. The road was constructed by Baron Hirsch through the Balkan Peninsula and was a part of a plan, apparently then in process of development, to provide an overland route with direct railroad connection from the capital of Germany not only to Bagdad but to some point on the Persian Gulf below Bagdad, giving Germany the advantage over England in a short route to India. The only break in the all-rail route was at Constantinople, in crossing the Bosphorus, and the tunneling or bridging of this historic piece of water is not by any means an impossible engineering feat.

In 1888, when the all-rail route to Constantinople was completed there were only short railway lines anywhere within the Turkish Empire eastward and these were mostly in the hands of Germany, with kilometric guarantees from the Ottoman Government. Little by little the Germans obtained from the Turkish government concessions to construct a railway toward the southeast from Constantinople.

In 1893 they were granted such a concession from Eski-shehir to Konia. This line was open to traffic in 1896.

There is no need of following out in detail the development of the Bagdad Railway, which was under construction throughout its lower length by German engineers at the outbreak of the war. This construction has been pushed until at the present time, so far as can be ascertained, there is direct railway connection between Constantinople and Nisibin, nearly 100 miles to the east of Oorfa. This line has afforded the only means of supplying the two Ottoman armies operating on the Palestine and the Mesopotamian fronts. The acquisition and construction of this railway by the Germans is another indication of Germany's purpose to occupy at least the southern section of Europe and to control a direct line of communication from Berlin to Constantinople and the Persian Gulf. Branch lines have been surveyed reaching into the productive regions north of this main line, but none of these lines are constructed up to the present time. It is reported that there were less than 150 miles of this line to be completed to make an unbroken connection from Constantinople to Bagdad. That section of the Bagdad Railway that was started from Bagdad is now of course in the hands of the Allies; the remaining section is still in the hands of the Turkish forces.

Little attention was given in the Western world to the concessions secured by Germany for this railway, and it seems to have aroused little suspicion in the minds of the European government that Germany was carrying out a deep-laid plan to gain control over the heart of Asiatic Turkey. This point became more apparent through the developments of the war, showing now completely Germany had mastered the situation from the beginning and made preparation for the military use of all this part of Turkey in case of a European outbreak. Had there been no war in Europe, Germany would have gone on quietly completing her plans, finishing the railway, and so making herself practically impregnable in Turkey. From the outbreak of the war until the present time she has been doing

everything in her power to gain a mastery over the Turkish forces, holding as she does the control of the same through Enver Pasha, the minister of war, and as the entire country is under military control, all Turkey being within the war zone, she has been able to hold unbroken sway to the present hour.

The disaffection of Arabia and its affiliation with the Allies, taken together with the success of the Allied forces on both the Palestine and Mesopotamian fronts, leading to the loss of Bagdad and Jerusalem, have introduced a decidedly new element into the plans of Germany for threatening India and Egypt from southeastern Turkey. Unless there is a marked change in the war situation in that region there is no hope in this direction. In order to offset the blocking of the contemplated pathway to the Persian Gulf and to India, the Germans have now made their treaty with Russia, throwing the entire Trans-Caucasus area ostensibly into the hands of Turkey but actually into the control of Germany. This will give Germany, through its vassal, Turkey, the control of the railway running from Batoum across the Trans-Caucasus to Baku on the Caspian Sea. This is an area rich in resources, and especially in oil; the oil wells being reckoned among the most productive in the world. The possession of this territory will give Germany a decided hold upon Persia, and through Persia will enable her to threaten the safety of northwestern India. If this accession can be maintained by Germany it will probably in the long run be fully as advantageous to her as the original plan by way of the Bagdad Railway and the Persian Gulf.

CONSTANTINOPLE AS A POLITICAL CENTER

The location of Constantinople at the point where Asia and Europe almost touch each other is of fundamental political importance. One can readily see by glancing at the map the commanding position that Constantinople holds not only in relation to the Black Sea, the Sea of Marmora, and the Dardanelles, but with reference to the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal. The harbor of Constantinople

is unsurpassed; the fleets of the world could lie thereat anchor in perfect safety. The Dardanelles, as has been demonstrated by the present war, is capable of defence against the united attack of the navies of the world. The first-class naval and military power that holds Constantinople as its capital could dominate the Mediterranean and so the short passage from Europe to India and the Far East. It is no wonder therefore that Constantinople has always been a problem before the European nations. This fact, has more to do than almost any other with the maintenance upon the Bosphorus of Turkey as a government. It seemed to be essential for the protection of the Mediterranean and for the balance of power in Europe to have a second or third rate power hold Constantinople and dominate the Dardanelles.

It is also an interesting fact that the Greek nation went to pieces with Constantinople as its capital; and now there is evidence to lead to the conclusion that the Ottoman Empire is crumbling to its fall, with its capital at the same place, although it has held sway there for 400 years. It is well known, however, that it did not always dominate the situation because of its own power and military or naval strength, but by virtue of its weakness. The nations of Europe agreed to protect the integrity of the Ottoman Empire at Constantinople for their own protection and because they could not agree upon the occupancy of that important center by any other nation, European or Asiatic.

Early in the present world conflict Russia was assured by the Allies that if she faithfully did her part in the present conflict she should be given Constantinople and the Dardanelles as her reward. There were many leaders in Great Britain who reluctantly consented to this agreement, and there were many leaders in Russia who were very much puzzled to know whether Constantinople would be to Russia an asset or a grave liability. Sir Edwin Peers reports that in a conversation he had with the President of the Russian Duma a little over a year ago this question was discussed. Sir Edwin made the remark to the Russian, "You are unquestionably fighting for the mastery of Constantinople."

To which the Russian immediately replied, throwing up his hands, "What could we do with Constantinople! It is more than 300 miles from the nearest border of Russia. Unless we could control a large section of Roumania and Bulgaria and Thrace, so as to have a direct connection between Odessa and Constantinople, it would be a constant source of peril to Russia and always the vulnerable point at which the attack of any political enemy could be directed." He went on however to say, "What is Russia in this war for unless it be to gain Constantinople?" That is where the question stood until Russia's withdrawal from the Alliance when of course she sacrificed everything that had been promised her and is entirely out of the running at the present time.

This raises the serious question as to what will be done with Constantinople under the reconstruction. There is reason to believe that the European nations in considering the matter have practically decided that none of the first-class European powers shall hold Constantinople. The question therefore is as to what second-class or third-class power shall have that privilege—or, we may say—responsibility. If Bulgaria had remained true to the Allies she would have had a fair chance of being chosen for that responsibility, but she is now out of the question.

Lloyd George in a recent speech in Parliament practically promised Constantinople to the Turks. While this was not promised in the form of a written declaration it probably was made after some discussion at least with France, although probably not with the United States. The conclusion which Lloyd George's utterances naturally led to was that if Turkey should break her relations with Germany she would be permitted to hold Constantinople, her ancient capital, but would lose other areas of her territory occupied largely by non-Moslems, as Armenia, Syria and Palestine. It can probably be safely assumed that there has been no definite agreement as yet among the Allies as to what ultimate disposal will be made of Constantinople. It is well known in some circles that the suggestion has been broached that the United States assume that responsibility in the in-

terests of European peace. Such a step on the part of the United States would be contrary to tradition, but as we are doing so many things these days contrary to every tradition and to Washington's much-quoted farewell address in which America was warned not to form entangling alliances with European nations, another breach of this time-honored tradition would not necessarily shock the country or the world. It certainly goes without saying that the United States, for its own sake, does not want Constantinople, and if arguments can be brought forward to lead it to break over its well-known policy and assume the government of that important center of the Near East, it will be wholly on the benevolent argument and in the interests of maintaining the peace. No European nation would think that the United States was entering upon that responsibility with any political ambition to control the politics of the Near East or of the Mediterranean, and we can hardly imagine America's taking that responsibility, except temporarily, and until some better disposition can be made of that important area. In all of this discussion it is necessary to think of the area covered not simply as the city of Constantinople but all of the environments of the Sea of Marmora and the Dardanelles, including the whole valley of the Bosphorus. This would virtually be a small state, with a population of several million, which under proper management would assume large commercial importance. After the war is over and the arteries of communication in Asia Minor have been developed, Constantinople will be the natural outlet for the rich areas lying at the back side, across Asia Minor and Armenia as well as the Transcaucasus and Persia, to say nothing of the environs of the Black Sea on the north and east. The Peace Commission upon which will be laid the responsibility of settling this important question will not have an easy task.

ARMENIA

The problems of the eastern section of the Turkish Empire, including what has been known heretofore as Armenia, but whose boundary is not clearly defined, is still another

question of prime importance to the Armenian, and in which a great number of people in Europe and America are also keenly interested. For generations the Armenians have dreamed of an autonomous country of their own, under some stable and safe form of government. No race has suffered from the maladministration of the Ottoman Empire more severely than the Armenians. The persecution which they have endured at the hands of the Turkish government has extended over several generations, and culminated since the beginning of the war by the most vicious attack ever made upon them as a race and which was extended from them to the Greeks and Syrians. It would seem that the world has decreed that to put the Armenians and Armenia back under Turkish Moslem rule would be not only unwise but the rankest cruelty and injustice to a stricken people. The endeavor on the part of the Turkish government to eliminate the Armenians and the Armenian question from the Ottoman Empire has resulted in the destruction of probably not far from 800,000, possibly more, of the Armenian people. The lives of many were deliberately taken, under official orders, while still vastly greater numbers have suffered death through their deportation into the deserts of Northern Arabia and Syria. This has reduced the natural population of Armenia, although at its best the Armenians themselves did not constitute the majority of the population of the six vilayets commonly referred to as the Armenian vilayets of northeastern Turkey. At the same time it must be noted that the Turks did not constitute a majority. The population of that country is made up primarily of Armenians, Kurds and Turks, with some Circassians and representatives of other races. The Kurds are out of sympathy with the ruling Turk. If we eliminate the Turk as the possible future ruler of that area, as we are bound to do by every sentiment of righteous justice and in the interests of good government, the question at once rises as to whether the government of the country could be put into the hands of the Kurds. To ask the question is sufficient for its immediate reply—that the Kurds have no faculty or training for any kind of administrative government.

The next question is as to whether in that area an Armenia could be constituted to be controlled and governed by Armenians alone. This question would have been a much fairer question to ask and much easier to answer before this terrible blow, which has so reduced the strength of the Armenians. At the present time, after such severe losses, there are few indeed who would advocate the creation of an Armenia to be put under the control of Armenians alone. In fact, the Armenians themselves are not asking for this, but they are asking that that entire area, including an outlet on the Black Sea and also on the Mediterranean, extending somewhat beyond the so-called six Armenian provinces, shall be given a separate government, wholly independent of the Turk or of any possible Turkish government that may exist on the West, controlled by some European or Western nation that will guarantee to the country a measure of self-government and prepare the region for absolute self-government in the future. This request and desire is not unreasonable and is capable of realization if only the Western nation can be discovered with strength enough to command the respect and confidence of all the other nations of Europe and the world and with ability to organize a government that shall guarantee safety to all the people within its borders and that shall develop the resources of the country and train the people gradually in self-government.

The nation that assumes this responsibility must be one of sufficient size and strength to command confidence and with revealed ability to develop the resources of the country, industrial, as well as intellectual and moral. Among the large nations of Europe there is probably none that could be agreed upon because of the fear of political ambitions and that the territory would be governed in the interests of the governing nation. Under any condition, Russia is out of the question. She has more than she can do at home in organizing self-government. This leaves in Europe, England, France, Italy of the Allies, and Germany an enemy country. Unquestionably Germany must be eliminated as a possibility for either the control of Constantinople

or of Armenia. Whether or not France and England could agree that either one of them should hold that important position remains to be seen. The position if held by Great Britain would strengthen her hold upon India and give her a new basis for defence from any attack upon the north or west. Whether or not France would assume the responsibility for all of that area, including Northern Syria, remains to be seen.

As to whether any of the second-rate powers could be trusted with this responsibility is not so clear. Scandinavian countries have had little experience in colonization and in developing self-governing colonies. Spain has proven her inability by her government in the Philippines and in Porto Rico. Portugal has more than she can handle now in East and West Africa. Probably Holland would hardly wish to undertake more in this line than she has in the Congo District. Switzerland has never had experience in colonization and in the control of remote colonies and has probably not a sufficient military power to command the confidence of Europe. It is natural that again attention should turn to the United States as the country that has demonstrated its ability to give a good, safe local government to an Asiatic people and prepare them for self-government. The attention of Europe has been directed to America's achievements in this direction in the Philippine Islands and in Porto Rico, and this has given the United States a reputation for colonization possessed by no other country. There is a feeling in wide circles, including the Armenians, that if the United States should assume this responsibility she would perform it with credit to herself and with absolute justice to the people governed, and that in the course of years—perhaps a generation or more—a government could be established in the area above outlined which would be capable of administering its own affairs. Of course it would not be a government administered wholly by people of any one race, but all races would be drawn upon, as they had ability to contribute. There is no country that will be better able to develop the vast undeveloped internal resources of the country than the United States, and so put

the whole area upon a self-supporting basis at an early date. There is a probability that this question will be put to the United States for a decision as soon as matters in Turkey settle down and the world is ready to take up the subject of re-construction and re-organization in the interests of permanent peace. There are few who doubt that the United States could accomplish all that could be expected of it, and more, in this direction, if it should give itself to the task.